



The Sixty-fourth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,546th Concert

Paul Galbraith, *guitarist*

October 30, 2005
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Baroque Keyboard Suite

Ouverture (K. 399)

Fugue (K. 153)

Allemande (K. 399)

Courante (K. 399)

Gigue (K. 574)

Frank Martin (1890–1974)

Quatre pièces brèves

Prélude

Air

Plainte

Comme une gigue

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Ma mère l'oye (Mother Goose Suite) (1908–1910)

Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant (Pavane of Sleeping Beauty)

Petit poucet (Tom Thumb)

Laideronnette, impératrice des pagodes

(Laideronnette, Empress of the Pagodes)

Les entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête

(Conversations between Beauty and the Beast)

Le jardin féerique (The Enchanted Garden)

INTERMISSION

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

French Suite no. 2, BWV 813 (1725)

Allemande

Courante

Sarabande

Air

Menuet

Gigue

Manuel Ponce (1882–1948)

Variations and Fugue on “La Folia”

The Musician

Lauded for his “exceptional artistry” by the *New Yorker* and for music making described as “pure magic” by the *Santa Barbara News-Press*, Paul Galbraith won the Silver Medal at the Segovia International Guitar Competition at age seventeen. Andrés Segovia, who was present, called his playing “magnificent.” Galbraith’s guitar is equipped with two extra strings, one at the high end and one at the low end. The instrument is supported by a metal end pin (similar to that of a cello), which rests on a wooden resonance box. Both the extraordinary design of the guitar and Galbraith’s unique playing style are considered groundbreaking developments in the history of the instrument, increasing its range to an unprecedented extent. Galbraith has specially arranged all of the works on this program for performance on the eight-string guitar.

Galbraith has been featured twice on National Public Radio’s *All Things Considered* and numerous times on *Performance Today*. He made his New York debut at the Frick Collection in 2000, receiving a rave review in the *New York Times*. In addition to frequent appearances throughout the United States, Galbraith tours Great Britain, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Hungary, and the Netherlands as well as other countries. During the Bach Year (2000) he was a guest artist at the Carmel (California), Denver, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia festivals commemorating that composer.

Recent orchestral engagements in the United States include concertos with the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, the Knoxville Symphony, the Santa Rosa Symphony, and the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra. In March 2003 Galbraith and the St. Petersburg String Quartet co-commissioned and gave the world premiere of a new work, *Rhapsody for Guitar and String Quartet*, by Georgian composer Zurab Nadarejshvili. Galbraith’s recording of his transcriptions of the violin sonatas of J. S. Bach was nominated for a Grammy Award and chosen as one of the two best CDs of 1998 by *Gramophone Magazine*. The recording also received a four-star rating in *Stereo Review* and reached the “top ten” on *Billboard*’s classical charts. His most recent CDs,

on the Delos label, are *Bach Lute Suites*; *Paul Galbraith Plays Haydn* (featuring Galbraith's arrangements of four keyboard sonatas); and *In Every Lake the Moon Shines Full*, a collection of folk tunes from many countries.

Born in Scotland, Paul Galbraith has lived in Malawi, Greece, the United Kingdom, and Brazil. He was a founding member of the Brazilian Guitar Quartet, playing with them until the summer of 2003. His principal teacher since 1983 has been the Greek conductor, pianist, and philosopher George Hadjinikos. Galbraith appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Lisa Sapinkopf Artists of Emeryville, California.

Program Notes

One does not usually think of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the quintessential classical composer, as a source of baroque dances, but in fact he wrote a large number of pieces using the forms of the earlier period. In some cases they appear in suites, such as number 399 in the catalogue compiled by Ludwig Adolf Friedrich Köchel (1800–1877). In other cases the dances survive as miscellaneous single pieces for which the context has been lost, such as the *Fugue* K. 153 and the *Gigue* K. 574. Five of these lovely anachronisms from Mozart's pen have been assembled by Paul Galbraith to form the suite with which this program begins.

Frank Martin was born in Geneva, Switzerland, the tenth and youngest child of a clergyman and his wife. He played and improvised on the piano even before he was old enough to go to school. A performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, which Martin first heard at age twelve, left a lasting impression on him. His four-movement guitar suite, *Quatre pièces brèves*, follows Bach's established model for keyboard and lute suites, but introduces a modern musical idiom to create a darker, more dissonant style. The *Prélude* establishes this atmosphere immediately, and the rhythmically active bass melody sounds clearly over the pedal tones emanating from the open treble strings of the guitar. The delicate *Air*, a sarabande in all but

name, provides a respite from the turbulence of its companion movements. The *Plainte*, the emotional heart of the suite, features a haunting melody accompanied by repeatedly strummed chords. The technically challenging *Comme une gigue*, with two-against-three rhythms, ends this brief but intriguing work, a gem of the twentieth-century guitar repertoire.

It is said that Maurice Ravel had the soul of a child who never left the world of fairy tales. He loved young people and was especially fond of the daughters of close friends, Minnie and Jean Godebski, for whom he composed the *Mother Goose Suite*. In an autobiographical note he wrote, “The idea of evoking in these pieces the poetry of childhood naturally led me to simplify my style and to refine my means of expression.” Each piece refers to one of the traditional Mother Goose stories:

1. *Pavane de la Belle au bois dormant*: This dance is performed as the princess sleeps. The servants gracefully tiptoe around her bed to protect her.
2. *Petit poucet*: Tom Thumb thinks he is clever as he drops a trail of breadcrumbs in the woods so he can find his way home. But the birds outsmart him and eat them. As Tom wanders anxiously, the birds, including the cuckoo, have the last laugh.
3. *Laideronnette, impératrice des pagodes*: Cursed by a witch to endure ugliness, Princess Laideronnette journeys to an enchanted island inhabited by “pagodes” and “pagodines,” tiny beings made of precious stones who play on nutshells as she bathes. A handsome prince appears, and the curse is lifted. In this movement Ravel borrows Japanese musical motifs.
4. *Les entretiens de la Belle et de la Bête*: The beast and a beautiful princess dance a graceful waltz until the beast suddenly turns into a prince “more handsome than Love.” The breathtaking transformation is symbolized by a startling musical metamorphosis.
5. *Le jardin féerique*: The enchanted garden comes from Ravel’s imagination and provides a euphoric climax to the set. A hymn-like tune is played as a door opens to reveal a magic bower.

The title page of the volume that contains J. S. Bach's *Suite no. 2*, BWV 813, includes the phrase, in Bach's own hand, "Suites pour le clavecin." This fact prompted an early publisher to call it and the other works in the volume "French suites." Curiously, they are less related to French models than are the so-called "English suites." Nevertheless, elements of baroque French keyboard music are present in this work, notably in the gorgeous opening *Allemande in style brisé* (broken style), in which melodic lines are subservient to the broken chords, and in the final *Gigue*, with its characteristic dotted rhythms.

The legendary Spanish guitarist Andrés Segovia wrote: "It would be unfair to limit the beauty of [the guitar] to the mere accompaniment of folksong and dances. The scope of the guitar has to be widened; music of greater significance should be played on it... In relation to other instruments, the guitar is what the lied is to the opera or a quartet to an orchestra." After his first successful concert in Paris, on April 7, 1924, Segovia began asking composers from all over the world to write original and innovative music for the guitar. In 1930 Segovia came across the theme known as *La Folia*, thought to be of medieval Portuguese origin. It had been used in sets of variations by composers from Corelli to Rachmaninoff. He wrote to Manuel Ponce (1882–1948), Mexico's most famous composer of that era: "Do not deny me the pleasure of composing a grand variational work on this theme. In exchange ask for any sacrifice, but do not deny me this!" Ponce's response, *Variations and Fugue on "La Folia,"* has become a staple in the twentieth-century guitar repertoire. In his congratulations to the composer upon receiving the score, Segovia asserted: "The variations are as beautiful as any in the Bach *Chaconne* [BWV 1004]." Ponce went on to compose three other sets of variations for guitar, each demonstrating the instrument's range of textures and idiomatic effects.

*Program notes on the works by Martin, Ravel,
Bach, and Ponce by Paul Galbraith.*

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry after 6:30 pm
is not permitted.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

Mailing address
2000B South Club Drive
Landover, MD 20785

www.nga.gov